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***Subterranean Struggles: New dynamics of mining, oil and gas in Latin America***

Edited by Anthony Bebbington and Jeffrey Bury

Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013.

In all corners of the developing world, pressures on natural resources have dramatically increased in response to escalating global demands for fuel and non-fuel minerals. Unprecedented global investments in the extractive industries have had significant social, political and economic implications for actors at all scales, but particularly for those at the local level. Such impacts have increasingly led to conflict and struggle, which have arguably become an integral feature of the 'new geography of extraction'. It is therefore no surprise that interest in the extractive industries has also grown rapidly within the wider geography and development studies literature, and more specifically within the field of political ecology.

Adding to an already burgeoning body of scholarship, Bebbington and Bury's recent edited volume offers readers a dynamic and up-to-date account of the struggles and contestations generated by resource extraction in Latin America, drawing upon extensive field-based research in Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. What sets this book apart, however, is its unique focus on a political ecology of the subsoil. While much analysis within political ecology has tended to exhibit a 'surface bias', the collection of chapters in this book offers an original and innovative perspective on how subsoil materials flow across frontiers and boundaries, and transform social life and human-environment relationships. In doing so, it makes an important contribution to understanding the relationship between the subsoil and Latin American political economy, and, more specifically, how place-based struggles around

natural resources become nested within the wider structures and processes of a 'new geography of extraction'.

The book is comprised of 11 chapters, which together trace the political-ecological transformations that have become characteristic of the last two decades of expansion in the region's extractives economy. While the various contributions in the collection address different elements of this trajectory, they all converge around the particular issue of struggle. The introductory overview by Bebbington and Bury serves as an effective roadmap for the chapters to follow, providing a convincing case for engaging with a political ecology of the subsoil. Here, the analytical and political significance of the subsoil is presented, and located within recent trends and transformations in Latin America. The theoretical and methodological foundations for a political ecology of the subsoil are also succinctly outlined.

Building on these foundations, Chapter 2 by Bury and Bebbington then sketches out the contours of the new political economy of extraction in the Andean-Amazonian region, offering insight on both the historical and macroeconomic dimensions of recent extractive driven transformations. The message of the chapter is clear: the territorialized dimensions of contemporary change in the extractives sector have not appeared in a vacuum and must be understood as a process that has been shaped by wider forces across time and space. This broader geographical and temporal context sets the stage for the empirical case study Chapters 3 through 8, all of which adopt a subnational focus. Drawing on detailed research carried out in Bolivia, Peru and Ecuador, a range of important contemporary themes are explored, including: struggles around 'resource nationalism' (Perreault); the tension between mining and conservation (Bury and Norris); conflicts between mining and alternative livelihoods (Moore and Velasquez); the effects of mining projects on territorial

dynamics (Warnaars); relationships between social movements and the state (Bebbington and Scurrah); and the 'synergistic' impacts of extractive projects on catchment communities (Hindery).

Chapters 9 (Postigo, Montoya and Young) and 10 (Bebbington, Bebbington, Hinojosa, Burneo and Bury) reflect upon the broader patterns of extraction by comparing the different ways in which regional and subnational dynamics interact, while drawing upon a variety of geographical contexts. At the heart of the analysis in both chapters is the 'absolute centrality of struggle and mobilization' and how they impact on the dynamics of extraction. While each chapter has something different to say about the ways in which contestation shapes these dynamics, both provide some thought-provoking reflection on the role that the state assumes in the political ecology of extraction.

The concluding chapter 11 (Bebbington, Bury and Gallagher) reflects on the volume's contents as a whole, re-confirming the argument for a political ecology of the subsoil. In the process, a number of important themes that cross-cut all of the contributions are elaborated upon: the analytical significance of boundaries and frontiers; the nature and complexity of subterranean struggles and hidden identities; relationships between the state and the subsoil; and the methodological challenges of carrying out research on the political ecology of resource extraction. This chapter in effect serves as an anchor for all the contributions, synthesizing the implications of the collection for theory, policy and practice, while at the same time providing some critical reflection on the avenues ahead for the field of political ecology.

While this book has much to say about the dynamics of recent oil, gas and mineral investment in Latin America, one of its great strengths is that it does not attempt to force

definitive answers or prescriptive recommendations on the reader, in an effort to address the complexities and contradictions of extraction. Rather, in exploring key debates around subterranean struggles, the thought-provoking analysis in the collection raises some important questions about the relationships between political ecology, political practice and policy engagement. While the convergence of policy, political and geological conditions in the Andean region of Latin America has indeed become particularly appealing to extractive industry investment, and a 'hot bed' for social mobilization and struggle, the collection also clearly speaks to parallel discussions playing out in other regions of the developing world. This book is not only a foundational text for political ecologists, but it will have far reaching influence across a wide range of disciplines. Most notably, it is sure to offer critical new insight and provide a more nuanced understanding of the nature of the subterranean struggles that have become characteristic of extractive industry expansion in Latin America and beyond.

Roy Maconachie  
University of Bath